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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of instructional evaluations by principals and their attitudes toward the supervisory conference. It also sought to determine whether teachers' attitudes are affected by six different variables: race, age, sex, years of teaching, level of assignment, and level of certification. The study was conducted in a large urban school system in the Southeast during 1982 to 1983. The Post-Evaluative Conference Rating Scale (PECRS) and the Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire (SBDQ) were used. In looking at teachers' perceptions of supervisors, attitudes toward the principal, and teachers' attitudes toward the conference, the study found that collaborative behavior produced a positive correlation while directive behavior yielded a negative correlation. In reviewing the influence of the six variables, only level of assignment was found to be significant: it produced a negative simple correlation. The author states a need for future studies on additional predictor variables. (MD)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORY BEHAVIORS AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SUPERVISORY CONFERENCE FOLLOWING CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

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Statement of the Problem

This study sought (1) to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of the behaviors of their principals in the area of evaluating instruction and their perceptions of a post-evaluative conference; and (2) to determine if the perceptions of teachers' attitudes toward a post-evaluative conference are significantly affected by any of the following variables:

a. race of the teacher,

b. age of the teacher,

c. sex of the teacher,

d. years of teaching experience,

e. level of teaching assignment, and

f. level of certification.

Rationale

Social behaviorists have found it useful to analyze the complex organization of society through the positions occupied by the people within it.[1] The elements of the positions, or roles, are the behaviors, attitudes and expectations attached to them. This is the case also for

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[1] Roger W. Heyns, The Psychology of Personal Adjustment (New York: Dryden Press, 1958), p. 273.

the supervisory role.[2] With a more careful analysis of supervisory behaviors and their consequences, the supervisor's roles can be put into perspective in terms of their relationship to the instructional program.

Generally, the principal is considered to be the supervisor of instruction for his building. One of his more important duties is to influence teaching behavior so that learning on the part of the student is both enhanced and improved.[3] This duty has grown in significance as increased emphasis is placed on accountability in public education. The principal has thus been forced to undertake the careful evaluation of teachers. Typically, this evaluation has taken the form of a principal observing instruction and later discussing his perceptions of that instruction with a teacher.

Research in school communication indicates that one-to-one contact is the most effective arrangement for meaningful interaction.[4] Wiles indicated that a skilled leader can conduct a conference in such a way as to develop a quality of problem-solving that surpasses that of a less skilled leader, and he can obtain a higher degree of acceptance than a less skilled leader.[5] Therefore, principals may benefit from

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[2]Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, "Theme B. Coping with Role Realities," in The Supervisor: New Demands; New Dimensions (Washington: The Association, 1969), pp. 19-70.

[3]Kimball Wiles and John T. Lovell, Supervision for Better Schools (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 82.

[4]Ronald C. Doll, Leadership to Improve Schools (Worthington, Ohio: Charles A. Jones Publishing Co., 1972), p. 95.

[5]Wiles, Supervision for Better Schools, p. 82.

knowledge about the evaluation process that will aid them in opening the lines of communication. The lines of communication may also be affected by the perceptions teachers have of the principal. The principal should be aware that the teachers' perceptions of him and his role determine how well they will receive his attention and suggestions.[6] Therefore, principals should not only be aware of the ways teachers perceive them in direct forms of communication, but also of how they perceive their overall behavior. Principals must realize that their role may place them in a position of conflict. Argyris described frustration, conflict, failure, and short time perspectives as results of an incongruence between mature personality needs and formal organizational requirements.[7] In analyzing the individual-organizational conflict, Sergiovanni and Carver identified the school's concern for a quality product as well as quantity as leading to conflict for some staff members.[8] The principal must strive to strike a balance between the needs of the school district and the needs of the individuals within the school. Knowledge about how teachers perceive their behaviors, and what subsequent effect this has on effectiveness in the area of instructional improvement, may help

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[6]Adolph Unruh and Harold E. Turner, Supervision for Change and Innovation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), p. 15.

[7]Chris Argyris, "A Basic Incongruency Between the Needs of a Mature Personality and the Requirements of Formal Organization," in Models for Management: The Structure of Competence. ed. John A. Shtogren (The Woodlands, Texas: Teleometrics International, 1980), pp. 90-95.

[8]Thomas J. Sergiovanni and Fred D. Carver, The New School Executive: A Theory of Administration (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 145-146.

principals alter behaviors that are perceived in a negative light by teachers and continue behaviors that are pleasing to them.

Procedure

The Sample

The population of this study was all of the teachers in a large urban school system in the Southeast who were involved in supervisory conferences during the 1982-1983 school year. The subjects consisted of 8 teachers from each of the 37 elementary schools and 19 secondary schools. Seventy-five percent of the 448 teachers who were asked to participate returned completed questionnaires for a total N of 338.

Instruments

The Post-Evaluative Conference Rating Scale (PECRS) was used to determine teachers' perceptions of the supervisory conference. Blackbourn and Moody developed and field tested the instrument in 1978.[9] The scale is a semantic differential which identifies two major aspects of the post-evaluative conference. Subscale I measures teachers' perceptions of the environment in which the conference took place. Subscale II measures teachers' perceptions of the attitudes and behaviors of the principal during the conference.

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[9]Joe M. Blackbourn and Lamar Moody, "Factors Which Account for Teachers' Perceptions of the Post-Evaluative Conference Following Classroom Observation" (a research paper, Bureau of Educational Research, Mississippi State University, 1978).

The instrument was developed according to the recommendations of Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum.[10] Each scale in the instrument is a pair of bipolar adjectives used as a seven point rating scale. The bipolar adjectives were chosen from the word pool developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum. Additional adjectives were added by Blackbourn and Moody.

The construct validity of the instrument was established by the application of a Principal Components Varimax Rotation Analysis to data collected in an urban school system. This analysis rendered two factors, Subscale I and Subscale II. These factors explained 58% of the total variance. Based on the suggestions of Cooley and Lohnes, judgements were made on the items to be retained in each factor.[11] Such judgements were based upon rotated loadings of at least .300. An alpha coefficient was computed to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. A coefficient of .95 was obtained.

The Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire (SBDQ), Form 1, Subscale 8, was used to determine teachers' perceptions of their principal's supervisory behaviors. This instrument was developed and field tested by Sistrunk. Form 1 is an ordinal scale composed of three dimensions, eight subscales, and 53 triads of behaviors. However, only Subscale 8, Evaluating Instruction and Instructors, was used in this study. The researcher was given permission by the author to change

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[10] Charles Egerton Osgood, George J. Suci, and Percy H. Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1957).

[11] William W. Cooley and Paul R. Lohnes, Multivariate Data Analysis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1971).

the term "encourages" to "permits" throughout the subscale. The change was merely for the purpose of clarification.

The construct validity for this form of the instrument was established through its firm basis in the theoretical foundations of motivation, satisfaction, and supervision. Utilization of two steps of the Delphi technique increased the validity of the instrument.

Content validity was developed through factor analysis. Criterion related validity was established through canonical correlation of Form 1 with Form 2, correlations with the California F Scale, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, and a number of demographic variables. Canonical correlations between Form 1 and Form 2 yielded coefficients with each other at .99 on each of the directive, collaborative, nondirective dimensions and on the total scores of each instrument.[12] The alpha coefficient for Subscale 8, Evaluation of Instruction and Instructors, is .70.

Statistical Procedure

Multiple regression analysis was used as a statistical procedure in the various stages of the research design. A significance level of .05 was used throughout the study. In order to be significant, an F value needed to be equal to or greater than 3.84. A simple r of .20 or greater was considered significant.

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[12]Walter E. Sistrunk, "The Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire, Forms 1 and 2, as Research Instruments," paper presented at the Mississippi Inter-University Conference on Educational Administration, April 1982, pp. 7-8.

Findings

In studying the relationship between teachers' perceptions of supervisory behaviors and the criterion variables of teachers' attitudes toward the environment of the conference, teachers' attitudes toward the principal's behavior in the conference, and teachers' overall attitude toward the conference, collaborative behavior and directive behavior yielded significant simple correlations in all cases. Collaborative behavior produced a positive correlation while directive behavior yielded a negative correlation. Collaborative behavior also produced a significant F value when matched with each of the three criterion variables. In addition, nondirective behavior yielded a significant F value when matched with teachers' attitudes toward the principal's behavior in the conference and with teachers' overall attitudes toward the conference. These findings are outlined in Tables 1-3.

TABLE 1

RELATIONSHIP OF SUPERVISORY BEHAVIORS OF PRINCIPALS TO TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE POST-EVALUATIVE CONFERENCE

Variables	R	R^2	r	F
Collaborative Behavior	.4690	.2200	.47*	94.75*
Nondirective Behavior	.4769	.2275	-.10	3.25
Directive Behavior	.4769	.2275	-.41*	0.00

*Significant at .05 level

TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIP OF SUPERVISORY BEHAVIORS OF PRINCIPALS TO TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PRINCIPAL'S BEHAVIOR IN THE POST-EVALUATIVE CONFERENCE

Variables	R	R^2	r	F
Collaborative Behavior	.4505	.2029	.45*	85.55*
Nondirective Behavior	.4624	.2138	-.08	4.63*
Directive Behavior	.4624	.2138	-.41*	0.00

*Significant at .05 level

TABLE 3

RELATIONSHIP OF SUPERVISORY BEHAVIORS OF PRINCIPALS TO TEACHERS' OVERALL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POST-EVALUATIVE CONFERENCE

Variables	R	R^2	r	F
Collaborative Behavior	.4725	.2233	.47*	96.62*
Nondirective Behavior	.4818	.2322	-.10	3.87*
Directive Behavior	.4818	.2322	-.41*	0.00

*Significant at .05 level

In viewing the influence of race, age, sex, years of teaching experience, level of assignment, and level of certification of teachers with the supervisory behaviors of principals as perceived by teachers in predicting teachers' overall attitudes toward the post-evaluative conference, only level of assignment was found to be significant. Level

of assignment produced a negative simple correlation. In addition, level of assignment produced a significant F value. These findings are outlined in Table 4.

TABLE 4

RELATIONSHIP OF RACE, AGE, SEX, YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE, LEVEL OF TEACHING ASSIGNMENT AND LEVEL OF CERTIFICATION TO TEACHERS' OVERALL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POST-EVALUATIVE CONFERENCE

Variables	R	R^2	r	F
Level of Teaching Assignment	.2193	.0481	-.22*	16.97*
Level of Certification	.2207	.0487	-.003	0.21
Race	.2213	.0489	.01	0.10
Sex	.2218	.0491	-.07	0.07
Age	.2219	.0492	.01	0.02
Years of Teaching Experience	.2234	.0499	.005	0.23

*Significant at .05 level

Significance of the Findings

Since the principal's main duty is the improvement of instruction in his school, he needs to be aware of any way in which he can more easily move teachers toward this goal. Studies of this nature can yield information which may make principals more cognizant of the ways that teachers perceive their supervisory behaviors and what effect these perceptions have on subsequent efforts to improve classroom instruction.

Results reported in this study could be used to develop a rationale for additional research. Future studies should be conducted which include additional predictor variables to those studied. In addition, research should be undertaken which would attempt to identify the causes underlying the negative correlation between level of assignment of teachers and their perception of the post-evaluative conference.

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